

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS GLORIA MOLINA AND
DON KNABE

October 9, 2007

On Friday, August 10, 2007, 57-year-old grandmother Maria Hicks of Pico Rivera was shot and killed while attempting to prevent four vandals from defacing a wall in her neighborhood with graffiti. Ms. Hicks paid the ultimate price for her actions when one of the alleged vandals shot and killed her. This tragedy has sparked tremendous outrage throughout the San Gabriel Valley—but, unfortunately, it is not an isolated case. On Thursday, March 9, 2006, Robert Whitehead of unincorporated Valinda was shot and killed by vandals while attempting to stop them from spray-painting graffiti on his neighbor's home.

These incidents demonstrate vividly that local residents are eager to defend their neighborhood against graffiti vandals and other scofflaws. However, they also illustrate that graffiti is not a minor transgression but one that relies on fear, intimidation, and violence to silence law-abiding residents.

The community has spoken and we say, “Enough!” Vandals and their families should pay a stiff price for their misdeeds. As authorities entrusted by the residents of the County of Los Angeles to uphold public safety, it is incumbent upon us to take action on this matter. Apart from seeking all appropriate criminal and civil penalties against the

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perpetrators, parents of minors involved with graffiti vandalism must also be held to account. As the person(s) legally responsible for the actions of their child, it is critical that they share the costs and consequences of their children's actions.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Chief Executive Officer work with the Office of County Counsel, the Sheriff's Department, and the Department of Public Works to:

(1) Designate which county department would operate as the lead agency in civil graffiti citation cases; and

(2) Create a pilot project that would:

(a) Establish a set of civil fine standards whereby graffiti vandals—and, in the cases involving minors, their parents—would automatically be issued a base fine, and the cost of graffiti clean-up, upon receiving a graffiti citation; and

(b) Establish an Administrative Hearing Panel whose members would convene in graffiti vandalism cases and would provide due process to accused graffiti vandals—and, in the cases involving minors, their parents—in a process similar to traffic court; and

(3) Determine if any existing county ordinances or policies must be amended in order to accomplish the aforementioned directives and, if so, supply the Board of Supervisors with amending language specifically to achieve these objectives; and

(4) Supply a written report thirty days from Tuesday, October 9, 2007, on the progress of implementing these directives.